Drinking

By: Steve Shirley

Is drinking alcohol wrong? The Bible has a lot to say on drinking too much and drunkenness, but does not address social drinking as clearly. There are several things to consider, however, on the social drinking issue. The Bible tells us not to do anything that might cause someone to stumble in their faith or might cause harm to the furthering of God's kingdom (Rom 14:21)(Rom 14:13)(1 Cor 8:9)(1 Cor 10:23-24). There are many who believe drinking alcohol is against God or is not something a Christian should do; will they see you drinking and think negatively in some way about Christianity? I believe this is very possible. This being the case, it is certainly not worth it from that standpoint.

I have heard the argument that many people drank wine in the Bible, including Jesus, so it must be ok. There are several things to understand on this issue. First off, drinking wine was a part of the culture of that day. They drank wine with meals, just like we might drink a cola. There wasn't much else to drink, so it was not seen as wrong, but just a normal thing to drink. It was also used to treat illnesses (1 Tim 5:23) and was used to purify the water they drank many times. We now have many other options of things to drink, have medicines they never had, and clean water, so drinking alcoholic products is not really necessary.

We must also understand that social drinking can lead to alcoholism. Most alcoholics started in this way. What started as a way to socialize or unwind, slowly got out of control until they finally could not stop.

For those who are alcoholics or drunkards, there are also several things to consider. Most importantly, the Bible says that drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:10)(Gal 5:21). You need to understand that you have a problem. Denial is a thing that most alcoholics face before getting help. Do you say you can stop at any time? Do you blackout? Do you miss work because of drinking? These are a few of the MANY signs you have a problem. Once you see you have a problem, then God can work. As I understand it, most 12 step programs focus on a "higher power" to help in recovery. This "higher power" can be whatever God you believe in. While I know that many people have gotten free over the years with these 12 step programs, and that is wonderful, if you turned to a higher power apart from the God of the Bible, the Father through the blood of Jesus Christ, then you turned to a God who is not real and did nothing to aid you.

The God of the Bible helps in a specific way. It is through the blood of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit that we overcome our obstacles. If you have never accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior of your life, please see our Plan of Salvation link. A key thing in salvation is repentance. We must recognize our sin and be sorry for it and be willing to go in a new way. Until we are repentant, God cannot work. There are many people who are set free from alcoholism immediately when they repent and come to Christ, but more often is a struggle that is taken one day at a time. Many people struggle with this their whole lives, but the longer you remain free from it, the easier it becomes. You may stumble during the struggle, and give into temptation, but
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Friend, if you would like us to pray for you, please feel free to leave a prayer request on our home page. Always remember to be sober and vigilant and prepared for Christ's return at any moment (Mt 24:48-51)(Lk 21:34)(1 Th 5:6-7).

Verses dealing with drinking and drunkenness:

(Prov 20:1) Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

(Hos 4:11) Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart.

(Isa 5:22) Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink.

(Prov 23:20-21) Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: (21) For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.

(Rom 13:13) Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in clambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

(Isa 28:7-8) But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. (8) For all are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.

(Prov 23:29-35) Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? (30) They that tarry long at wine; They that go to seek mixt wine. (31) Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, When it giveth his colour in the cup, When it moveth itself aright. (32) At last it biteth like a serpent, And stingeth like an adder. (33) Thine eyes shall behold strange women, And thine heart shall utter perverse things. (34) yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, Or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. (35) They have stricken me, thou shalt say, and I was not sick; They have beaten me, and I felt it not: When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

(Eph 5:18) And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the spirit;

For a look at how being drunk caused problems for people in the Bible see:

Noah: (Gen 9:20-21)
Lot: (Gen 19:32-38)
Ben-hadad: (1 Kin 20:16-21)
King Ahasuerus: (Es 1:10-11)
King Belshazzar: (Dan 5:1-5)
The Corinthian Church: (1 Cor 11:21-22)

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